The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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ACCLAIMED GHAZAL ENSEMBLE PERFORMS AT CMA

"Rapturous ..."

— *Washington Post*

CLEVELAND — Having just released a new album, the critically acclaimed Indo-Persian trio *Ghazal* will perform at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) on Friday, May 5, 2000. Appearing as part of the museum's VIVA! Performing Arts Festival, the trio will perform many selections from their February 2000 release, *Moon Rise Over the Silk Road* (Shanachie). The concert, part of their U.S. tour, will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Gartner Auditorium. Limited tickets remain available at $23; advance purchase is strongly recommended by calling **1-888-CMA-0033** or online at **www.clemusart.com**.

The members of *Ghazal* — Shujaat Husain Khan (*sitar*) of India, Kayhan Kalhor of Iran (Persian *kamencheh*), and Swapan Chaudhuri of India (*tabla*) — form a musical melding "of staggering beauty," says Massoud Saidpour, CMA's artistic director of performing arts. He continues, "Rooted in the centuries-old musical traditions of India and Persia, the music's sensuous melodies, jubilant rhythm, and deep resonance make it readily accessible to Western audiences."

In addition to their most recent release, *Ghazal* has two other albums on the Shanachie label: *As Night Falls on the Silk Road* (1998) and *Lost Songs of the Silk Road* (1997).

The three performers are each international stars in their own right. Fresh from recording with the acclaimed *Kronos Quartet*, composer and multi-instrumentalist Kayhan Kalhor is an internationally recognized virtuoso of the *kamencheh*, a four-stringed instrument that is an ancestor to the Western violin. In addition to concertizing regularly with Iran's greatest musicians, he performs with various international artists. Next year he is scheduled for a collaboration with master cellist Yo-Yo Ma on a project titled *Silk Road*. Kalhor has lectured and performed extensively in Iran, Canada, and the United States. He also co-founded and tours with the *Dastan Ensemble*, one of the most highly acclaimed traditional Iranian music ensembles today.

Swapan Chaudhuri, hailing from India, is a master of the *tabla*, an Indian hand drum. Currently the director of percussion at the Ali Akbar College of Music in California, he has

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decades of experience performing beside such acclaimed performers as Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan.

Khan, son of the Indian *sitar* virtuoso Vilayat Khan, is a seventh-generation master of the *sitar* — a guitar-like instrument consisting of up to 20 strings — and is considered one of the greatest North Indian classical musicians of his generation, renowned for his vocal skills as well. A child prodigy, he began performing at age six, and has toured throughout India, Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe.

Persian and Indian musical traditions have a few similarities. Both use improvisation and related approaches to rhythm. Persian music consists of 12 modes (scales) called *dastgahs*; it shares several modes with the Indian classical music system, *raga*, in which certain musical intervals overlap. With this common ground, *Ghazal* produces a unique fusion, based almost wholly on improvisation. "Highly ornamental," explains Saidpour, "the music of *Ghazal*, like the poems of the great Persian poet Rumi, possesses an uncanny ability to marry feelings of earthy sensuality and ecstatic spirituality as if suggesting they are two sides of the same coin. This is what makes their music so universally appealing."

This is the final concert of the VIVA! series debut season. Information about the 2000-2001 season's concerts will be released in May. For more information on the CMA and its events, call **1-888-CMA-0033** or visit **www.clemusart.com**.

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